

"This grant is great news, especially following on recent sightings of nesting and feeding condors along the Big Sur coastline. The Ventana Wildlife Society has been instrumental in bringing us to this point where we can seriously anticipate the resurrection of a species we once thought was lost forever," said Farr.

"Ventana Wildlife Society is the only nonprofit organization in California releasing condors. This new consolidated rearing effort will dramatically help us reach our goals of having 150 condors in California free-flying in the wild by 2010. In addition, this project will help us to help condors become even more self-sufficient in the wild," said Kelly Sorenson, Executive Director of the Society.

The Society will use this grant, coupled with \$150,000 in matching funds, to build a new, larger aviary in the wilderness. The larger aviary will enable the Society to consolidate their rearing efforts and release more condors into the wild every year. The Society will also expand their efforts to help the condors learn foraging skills, strengthening their chances for survival as free-flying condors.

There are currently 55 free-flying condors in California; the Ventana Wildlife Society is responsible for releasing 38 of those birds into the wild. While captive breeding programs have reached the point of producing up to 35 California condor chicks annually, the Society has been limited by the small size of their current aviary to working with only six to seven birds at a time.

The Ventana Wildlife Society is a community-based private non-profit dedicated to conserving native wildlife and their habitats. The Society began conducting releases of California condors in January, 1997. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a non-profit organization, established by Congress in 1984, that works to promote public-private partnerships dedicated to wildlife conservation.